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Proposed amended claims

1. A method for pretreating a surface of a non-conducting material to be plated by way of precipitation of metal in the presence of a catalytic metal, and optionally to be subjected to a subsequent electrolytic plating or another type of surface treatment, characterised by

a) depositing an adsorbing metal oxide on the surface,

b) treating the surface with a solution of transition metal ions, and subsequently

c) treating the surface with a solution of catalytic metal ions,

where the transition metal ions used in step (b) are selected among such ions which can reduce catalytic metal ions into catalytic metal.

2. Method according to claim 1, characterised by the adsorbing metal oxide in step (a) being manganese dioxide (MnO_2) or ochre (Fe_2O_3).

3. Method according to claim 2, characterised by oxidizing the surface in step (a) by means of a permanganate compound while forming manganese dioxide, and by washing away the remaining permanganate compound after the oxidation without removing the formed manganese dioxide deposited in form of a layer or in form of small clusters on the surface.

4. Method according to claim 1, 2 or 3, characterised by treating in step (b) the surface with a solution of Sn^{++} ions or Co^{++} ions.

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5. Method according to any preceding claim, characterised by treating in step (b) the surface with an aqueous solution of transition metal ions.

6. Method according to claim 1, characterised by the catalytic metal ions being
5 ions of a metal from the platinum group, preferably Pd^{++} , Rh^{++} or Pt^{++} .

7. Method according to any preceding claim, characterised by treating in step (c) the surface with an aqueous solution of catalytic metal ions.

10 8. Method according to any of the preceding claims characterised by the non-conducting material including a polymer material as main ingredient.

9. Method according to claim 8, characterised by the polymer material being selected among polycarbonate (PC), polyphenylene oxide (PPO), acrylonitrile/butadiene/styrene-terpolymer (ABS), polyacrylamide (PAA), aliphatic or aromatic polyamide (PA), polyethylene (PE), polypropylene (PP), polyvinyl chloride (PVC), polystyrene (PS), polyether imide (PEI), polyphthalamide (PPA), polyphenylene sulphide (PPS), thermoplastic polyester (PET/PBT), liquid crystal polymer (LCP), polyether-ether-ketone (PEEK), polysulphone (PSU), polyethersulphone (PES),
15 polyurethane (PUR), epoxy (EP), unsaturated polyester (UP) and phenolic plastic (PF).

10. Method according to claim 8 or 9, characterised by the non-conducting material including reinforcing fibres and/or fillers based on organic and/or inorganic material.
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11. Method according to one of the claims 1 to 7, characterised by the non-conducting material including a glass, a ceramics or a biological material as main ingredient.
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12. A method for pretreating a surface of a non-conducting material to be plated by way of precipitation of metal in the presence of a catalytic metal, and optionally to be subjected to a subsequent electrolytic plating or another type of surface treatment, characterised by

- a) depositing manganese dioxide (MnO_2) or ochre (Fe_2O_3) on the surface;
- b) treating the surface with a solution of Sn^{++} ions or Co^{++} ions and subsequently,
- c) treating the surface with a solution of catalytic metal ions of a metal from the platinum group

13. An article of a non-conducting material with a surface being partially or completely coated with an autocatalytically deposited copper, cobalt, silver, tin, gold or nickel or an alloy thereof, obtainable by a pretreatment of a non-conducting article by the method according to any of the preceding claims and followed by an autocatalytic deposition.

14. An article of a non-conducting material with a surface being partially or completely coated with an electrolytic plating layer obtainable by a pretreatment of a non-conducting article by the method according to any of the claims 1 to 12 followed by an autocatalytic deposition and then a conventional electrolysis.

15. An article according to claim 14 with one or more electrolytic plating layers.

16. An article according to claim 15 and coated with at least one electrolytic plating layer with a high electric conductivity.

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